

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Heading, beginning at line 1, of page 3 has been amended as follows:

~~Disclosure~~ Summary of the Invention

Heading beginning at line 15 of page 8 has been amended as follows:

~~Best Modes for Carrying Out~~ Detailed Description of the Invention

Paragraph beginning at line 18 of page 8 has been amended as follows:

A first embodiment of the invention will be described with reference to Figure 1 through Figure 4. Figure 1 is an external view showing a case that there is no rotation of an elastic member relative to a shaft body. Reference numeral 1 denotes a grip portion made of a soft elastic member (elastic finger-grip member), and the grip portion 1 has a hollow portion 1c. As illustrated, the grip portion 1 is disposed around and encircles the shaft body. The forward end side (the lower side in the drawing) of the grip portion 1 is unrotatably (non-rotatably) fixed to a forward shaft (forward member) 2. On the other hand, the rear end side (the upper side in the drawing) of the grip portion 1 is also unrotatably

fixed to a middle shaft (rear member) 3. Its rear or rearward shaft 4, though unrotatably fixed to the forward shaft 2 via a linking member 7, is rotatably arranged relative to the middle shaft 3. Therefore, when the middle shaft 3 and rear shaft 4 are held with fingers or the like and rotated relative to each other, the forward shaft 2 ~~rotate~~ rotates together with the rear shaft 4 by way of the linking member 7 (Figure 4). This causes the grip portion 1 to be rotationally deformed in a twisted state (Figure 2). Incidentally, as the grip portion 1 is also rotationally deformed when the forward shaft 2 and the middle shaft 3 are held with fingers and rotated relative to each other, it is not absolutely necessary to link the forward shaft 2 and the rear shaft 4 with the linking member 7 as in the manipulation described above. The forward, middle and rearward shafts 2, 3, 4 constitute shaft portions that are arranged in series to form a shaft body.

Paragraph beginning at line 14 of page 9 has been amended as follows:

An embodiment of the invention will be described in detail with reference to Figure 4 and 5. A plurality of recesses, such as grooves 1a, are formed inside the grip portion 1 in the forward part, and engage with a plurality of projections, such as stubs 2a, formed in the rear part of the forward shaft 2. This causes one (forward) end of the grip

portion 1 to be unrotatably fixed to the forward shaft 2. A plurality of grooves 1a are also formed in the rear part of the inside of the grip portion 1, and engaged with a plurality of stubs 2a formed outside the middle shaft 3, resulting in unrotatable fixation of the other (rear) end of the grip portion 1 to the middle shaft 3. The means of fixing the grip portion 1 to the forward shaft 2 and to the middle shaft 3 are not limited to grooves (or stubs) 1a formed at the two ends of the grip portion 1 and stubs (or grooves) 2a formed on (in) the forward shaft 2 and the middle shaft 3 to engage with the grooves 1a, but other suitable fixing means or method as an adhesive, thermal fusion, ultrasonic deposition, caulking or press-fitting may be used.

Paragraph beginning at line 24 of page 10 has been amended as follows:

Though this embodiment is ~~supposed to be~~ a retractable writing tool having a ball-point pen 6 in a shaft body, a mechanical pencil, a solid correcting tool or the like may be disposed as well. Further, a gap 16 is formed between the middle shaft 3 and the linking member 7, and a friction ring 8 which consists of a soft member and whose sectional shape is rectangular, circular or oval is formed in the gap 16 to provide a frictional resistance force against the relative rotation of the middle shaft 3 and the linking member 7. In

other words, a frictional resistance force in the rotating direction is provided so that the restoring action of the grip portion 1 is prevented when the middle shaft 3 and the grip portion 1 are rotated relative to each other. Thus, the friction ring 8 obstructs the restoring action occurring when the grip is twisted. Further, the internal face in which the ring 8 is positioned from the rear end of the middle shaft 3 is in a conical shape, slightly expanding the part in which the ring 8 is positioned toward the rear end. By fitting the ring 8 to the linking portion 7 and then minimizing the frictional resistance occurring between the ring 8 and the internal face of the middle shaft 3 when the middle shaft 3 is fitted from front, the twist or the like of the ring 8 is prevented.

Paragraph beginning at line 4 of page 12 has been amended as follows:

A ~~concave portion 1d~~ is plurality of finger-contact portions such as concave portions 1d are formed in the surface of the grip portion 1, and the concave ~~portion 1d~~ is portions 1d are coated with a rubber-like paint whose surface is relatively smooth, but ~~this~~ the concave ~~portion~~ portions 1d may as well be molded as another member and partially embedded into the grip portion 1. In other alternative, the concave ~~portion~~ portions 1d may be molded integrally by such means as

two-colored molding. In this configuration, the two parts may be the same in hardness but different in color, or differentiated in hardness, but where they are to be differentiated in hardness, it is preferable for the concave ~~portion~~ portions 1d to be greater in hardness. More specifically, it is preferable for the concave ~~portion~~ portions 1d, with which fingers are to come into contact, to be 50 to 70 in Shore hardness and for other parts to be 20 to 50 in Shore hardness.

Paragraph beginning at line 13 of page 14 has been amended as follows:

The example shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10 is another variation of the way of providing a frictional resistance force against the relative rotation of the middle shaft 3 and the linking member 7. A plurality of undulating ribs 3c are formed on the inner circumferential face of the middle shaft 3. On the other hand, undulating engaging ribs 7c which can be engaged with or disengaged from and can override the ribs 3c are formed on the outer circumferential face of the linking member 7. The engagement of these ribs 3c and engaging ribs 7c maintains the rotational deformation of the grip portion 1 by a restoring force.

Paragraph beginning at line 7 of page 15 has been amended as follows:

In the example shown in Figure 11 and Figure 12, a forward shaft 14 and a rear shaft 15 are rotatably linked to each other to constitute the shaft body. Thus, the linking member 7 in the foregoing example is not used with a view to reducing the production cost. A detailed description will follow. The rear end of the grip portion 1 is fixed to the middle part of the rear shaft 15, while the forward end of the grip portion 1 is fixed to the forward part of the forward shaft 14. When the forward shaft 14 and the rear shaft 15 are rotated relative to each other, a twist is produced to the grip portion 1. In this example, too, there is arranged means of providing a frictional resistance force against the relative rotation of the rear shaft 15 and the forward shaft 14. Thus, a plurality of ribs 14a and 15a, which ~~can be contacted with~~ slidably contact each other, are radially formed at the rear end of the rear shaft 15 and the forward end of the forward shaft 14. Further, the rear shaft 15 and the forward shaft 14 are ~~urging~~ urged toward each other all the time to keep the ribs 14a and the ribs 15a in contact with each other. The urging force is achieved as the grip portion 1, which is fixed to both the forward shaft 14 and the rear shaft 15 ~~each other~~, draws one shaft toward the other. Thus, in this embodiment the rear shaft 15 is fixed to the forward

shaft 14 in a state that the grip portion 1 is extended beyond its natural length. Since a stress to contract the grip portion 1 arises as a result, there occurs an action to draw and urge the rear shaft 15 and the forward shaft 14 to each other. However, the aforementioned urging force may be brought to act by another means or member, such as a coil spring or some other springy member. In such a configuration as described, a relative rotation between the rear shaft 15 and the forward shaft 14 will make their respective ribs 14a and 15a override each other thereby to ~~rationally~~ rotationally deform or twist the grip portion 1 and, at the time the overriding is completed, the deformed, twisted shape is maintained.